

***Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton gave the following speech on North Korea entitled, "A Dictatorship at the Crossroads," at the East Asia Institute in Seoul, South Korea, on July 31, 2003.***

## **REMARKS BY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN BOLTON ON NORTH KOREA**

Distinguished guests, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to you again. Since I last spoke here in Seoul nearly one year ago, the United States and the Republic of Korea have forged ahead in strengthening our alliance and friendship. The foundation for this was made all the stronger by the extremely successful summit last May between President Bush and President Roh. At that summit, our two presidents made the firm commitment to move in lock-step to meet our shared challenges and opportunities. I am happy to say that we are taking the shared vision of our presidents and putting it into action.

Indeed, action is needed. As we stand here today having just celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice agreement that ended combat on the peninsula, the threat to the North posed by the Kim Jong Il dictatorship is a constant reminder of a powerful truth—freedom is not free.

In preserving freedom, it is important for all to have a shared understanding of the threats we face. Unfortunately, the last year has seen a dizzying whirlwind of developments on the threat posed by the Kim Jong Il dictatorship. Being so close to North Korea, there is no doubt that the threat posed by Kim Jong Il must weigh heavily on you. While it would be naïve and disingenuous for me to dismiss the danger, let me start off by striking a positive note: the world is united in working together to seek a peaceful solution to the threat posed by Kim Jong Il. Rarely have we seen the international community so willing to speak with the same voice and deliver a consistent message on an issue. In addition to consistency, there is a striking clarity to this message as well: the world will not tolerate Kim Jong Il threatening international peace and security with weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

The brazenness of Kim Jong Il's behavior in the past year is striking. While nuclear blackmail used to be the province of fictional spy movies, Kim Jong Il is forcing us to live that reality as we enter the new millennium. To give in to his extortionist demands would only encourage him, and perhaps more ominously, other would-be tyrants around the world. One needs little reminding that we have tested Kim Jong Il's intentions many times before—a test he has consistently failed. Since 1994, billions of dollars in economic and energy assistance have flowed into the coffers of Pyongyang to buy off their nuclear weapons program. Nine years later, Kim Jong Il has repaid us by threatening the world with not one, but two separate nuclear weapons programs—one based on plutonium, the other highly-enriched uranium.

If history is any guide, Kim Jong Il probably expects that his current threats will result in newfound legitimacy and billions of dollars of economic and energy assistance pouring into his failed economy. In this case, however, history is not an especially good guide—a page has been turned. Particularly after September 11<sup>th</sup>, the world is acutely aware of the danger posed to civilian populations by weapons of mass destruction being developed by tyrannical rogue state leaders like Kim Jong Il or falling into the hands of terrorists. Simply put, the world has changed. Consider that in 1994, I could have used the term “WMD” and most audiences would have stared at me blankly. In 2003, we all know it is shorthand for “weapons of mass destruction.” Clearly, this is a sad reflection on the dangerous times we live in.

Let us also consider the fact that in 1994, North Korea could have chosen to enter the international community on a new and different footing. While communist dictatorships were collapsing or reforming across the globe, there was even hope that Kim Il Sung’s North Korea would follow suit. When power passed to Kim Jong Il, the world hoped he would be more enlightened and recognize the benefits of participating in the global community—as opposed to threatening and blackmailing it.

Unfortunately, this still has not come to pass. Even a cursory glance of the first decade of Kim Jong Il’s dictatorial reign suggests that he has done nothing but squander opportunity after opportunity, olive branch after olive branch. Sadly, as an editorial cartoon in *The Economist* recently expressed so well, Kim Jong Il seems to care more about enriching uranium than enriching his own people.

Kim Jong Il, of course, has not had to endure the consequences of his failed policies. While he lives like royalty in Pyongyang, he keeps hundreds of thousands of his people locked in prison camps with millions more mired in abject poverty, scrounging the ground for food. For many in North Korea, life is a hellish nightmare. As reported by the State Department Report on Human Rights, we believe that some 400,000 persons died in prison since 1972 and that starvation and executions were common. Entire families, including children, were imprisoned when only one member of the family was accused of a crime. Consider the testimony of Lee Soon-ok, a woman who spent years in North Korean prison camps. She testified before the U.S. Senate that she witnessed severe beatings and torture involving water forced into a victim’s stomach with a rubber hose and pumped out by guards jumping on a board placed across the victim’s abdomen. She also reported chemical and biological warfare experiments conducted on inmates by the army.

And while Kim Jong Il is rumored to enjoy the internet so he can observe the outside world, he does not afford that right to his own people who are forced to watch and listen to only government television and radio programs.

Why is Kim Jong Il so scared of letting his people observe the outside world? The answer, of course, is that they will see the freedom enjoyed by much of the world and what they have been denied. They will see their brothers and sisters in Seoul, the capital of a booming vibrant democracy. They will see that there is a world where children stand a good chance to live to adulthood—a dream of every parent. More important, they will see that the excuses for their failed system provided by Kim Jong Il don’t stand scrutiny. It is not natural disasters that are to blame for the deprivation of the North Korean people—but the failed policies of Kim Jong Il. They will see that, unless he changes course, his regime is directly responsible for bringing economic ruin to their country. The world already knows this—which is why we will continue to give humanitarian food aid to the starving people of North Korea. But let there be no doubt about

where blame falls for the misery of the North Korean people—it falls squarely on the shoulders of Kim Jong Il and his regime.

There is still hope that Kim Jong Il may change course. All civilized nations and peace-loving people hope this to be true. But Kim Jong Il must make the personal decision to do so and choose a different path.

It is holding out this hope that has prompted the United States, in lock-step with our friends and allies in the region, to pursue the multilateral negotiations track. Let me be clear: the United States seeks a peaceful solution to this situation. President Bush has unambiguously led the way in mobilizing world public opinion to support us in finding a lasting multilateral solution to a problem that threatens the security of the entire world.

The operative term is “multilateral.” It would be the height of irresponsibility for the Bush Administration to enter into another bilateral agreement with the Kim Jong Il dictatorship. The Clinton Administration bravely tried with the Agreed Framework but failed because Kim Jong Il instructed his subordinates to systematically violate it in secret. To enter into a similar type of agreement again would simply postpone the problem for some future administration—something the Bush Administration will not do.

Postponing the elimination of Kim Jong Il’s nuclear weapons program will only allow him time to amass even more nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and to develop even longer range missiles. Any doubts that Kim Jong Il would peddle nuclear materials or nuclear weapons to any buyer on the international market were dispelled last April when his envoy threatened to do just that.

This will not stand. Some have speculated that the U.S. is resigned to nuclear weapons on the peninsula and we will simply have to learn to live with nuclear weapons in the hands of a tyrannical dictator who has threatened to export them. Nothing could be further from the truth.

This is why we are working so hard on pursuing the multilateral track in Beijing. Having just been in Beijing, I can confirm that we all believe this track is alive and well, but the ball is North Korea’s court. The key now is to get South Korea and Japan, and ultimately Russia and others, a seat at the table. We know that as crucial players in the region, and the countries most threatened by Kim Jong Il, the roles of Seoul and Tokyo are vital to finding any permanent solution. Those with a direct stake in the outcome must be part of the process. On this point we will not waver.

While the Beijing track is on course, prudence suggests that we pursue other tracks as well. We have been clear in saying that we seek a peaceful solution to resolve the threat posed by Kim Jong Il, but that all options are on the table. I would like to discuss two complementary tracks that we are pursuing now.

The first is action through the United Nations Security Council. As the UN body charged with protecting international peace and security, it could play an important role in helping to reach a peaceful settlement. Unfortunately, the Council is not playing the part it should. It was six months ago that the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency voted overwhelmingly to report North Korea’s violations to the Security Council.

To date, virtually nothing has happened. We believe that appropriate and timely action by the Security Council would complement our efforts on the multilateral track in Beijing. Just as

important, it would send a signal to the rest of the world that the Council takes its responsibilities seriously. I would note that when North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty the first time in March 1993, the Council took action within a month. Ignoring this issue will not make it go away—it will only reduce confidence in the Council and suggest to proliferators that they can sell their deadly arsenals with impunity.

The other track we are pursuing now is through the Proliferation Security Initiative, or PSI. When I spoke in Seoul almost a year ago, I detailed at-length the WMD programs actively being pursued by Kim Jong Il. The last year has seen Kim Jong Il accelerate these programs, particularly on the nuclear front. Brazenly threatening to demonstrate, even export, nuclear weapons, Kim Jong Il and his supports have defied the unanimous will of the international community.

If Pyongyang thought the international community would simply ignore its threats—it was mistaken. Recently, I attended the second meeting of the PSI, held in Brisbane, Australia and met with officials from ten other countries on the threats posed by dictators like Kim Jong Il. As the Chairman's Statement underscores, "the PSI is a global initiative with global reach." And we "agreed to move quickly on direct, practical measures to impede the trafficking in weapons of mass destruction, missiles and related items." Specifically, we are working on "defining actions necessary to collectively or individually interdict shipments of WMD or missiles and related items at sea, in the air or on land."

While global in scope, the PSI is cognizant of the reality that different countries pose different degrees of threat. Just as the South Korean Ministry of National Defense recently defined North Korea as the "main enemy," the nations participating in the PSI put North Korea and Iran at the top of the list of proliferant countries. That North Korea has earned this dubious distinction should come as little surprise in light of Pyongyang's trafficking in death and destruction to keep Kim Jong Il in power. It is practically their only source of hard currency earnings, unless of course you add narcotics and other illegal activities.

Hopefully, initiatives such as PSI will send a clear message to dictators like Kim Jong Il. In his specific case, we hope to communicate that while actively pursuing and believing that multilateral talks are a preferable way to find a lasting solution to the situation, we are not going to allow the DPRK regime to peddle its deadly arsenals to rogue states and terrorists throughout the world. Our national security, and our allies, as well as the lives of our citizens are at stake. Already, we are planning operational training exercises on interdiction utilizing both military and civilian assets. Kim Jong Il would be wise to consider diversifying his export base to something besides weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles.

The international community's tolerance for actions that defy global norms is fast shrinking. There is growing political will to take concrete steps to prevent dictators such as Kim Jong Il from profiting in ill-gotten gains. We are moving to translate this political will into action.

This choice is Kim Jong Il's and his alone. In coordination with our allies, we are prepared to welcome a reformed North Korea into the world of civilized nations. This would mean, however, that Kim Jong Il makes the political decision to undergo sweeping reforms. A good start would be to respect the human rights of his people and not starve them to death or put them in death camps. He should allow the families of the Japanese abductees to be reunited with their families, and he should provide a full account of the cause of death for the eight deceased abductees.

It would also mean respecting international norms and abiding by international commitments and giving up their extensive chemical and biological weapons programs. And it will certainly require Kim Jong Il to dismantle his nuclear weapons program—completely, verifiably, and irreversibly.

The days of DPRK blackmail are over. Kim Jong Il is dead wrong to think that developing nuclear weapons will improve his security. Indeed, the opposite is true. As President Bush has made clear: “A decision to develop a nuclear arsenal is one that will alienate you from the rest of the world.” Kim Jong Il has already squandered the first decade of his rule. To continue down the path toward nuclear weapons will squander his legacy as well. The choice is his to make—but whichever path he does choose—the United States and its allies are prepared. Let us hope he makes the right choice.